

Richard Hays: "...the most powerful argument for the truth of Scripture is a community of people who exemplify the love and power of the God that they have come to know through the New Testament. Apart from the witness of such communities, formal arguments for the authority of Scripture carry little weight."<sup>2</sup>

- i. The converse is true: The weakest argument for the truth of Scripture is a community of people claiming to believe, but who live for themselves alone.
- ii. Evangelism must grow out of the spiritual community.

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- What significance is there in Peter's choice of language (1 Peter 2:9) from Exodus 19:5? What is Peter saying about us?
- Do you ever wonder, "What is God doing in my life?" Can you see ways God has been working to build you together with His people?
- What are some of the ways the scripture calls us to a joined life? How is it to be expressed regularly in our lives?
- What are some of the ways that we are called to live differently than the world and in union with each other in Christ?
- How does the call to stop (sabbath) speak about who we are and are not? What does it say about others and who they are?
- Discuss the Richard Hays quote above (top of page). What does this say about the importance of the testimony we have before the world through the life of each member of the body?
- How do the truths of Scripture covered in this lesson impact your view of our weekly gathering in worship? ...community group? What affect might it have on your view of serving one another?

2 Hays, Richard. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* (Kindle Locations 446-448). HarperCollins.

## The Church: A Spiritual Community

Jerry Cisar — March 5, 2017

Text: 1 Peter 2:4-12

### Introduction

- A. Who we are effects what we do with what we learn.
- B. Who we are effects what we do... but only if we know who we are and what it means to be who we are.

### I. Being Built into a Spiritual House (2:4-5)

- A. When we are joined to Jesus Christ we are joined to one another.
  - i. Worldliness
  - ii. The cure?
- B. This *spiritual house* is the Temple.
  - i. Ephesians 2:20-22
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 16-17
    - a) Division in the church is evil because it destroys God's temple.
    - b) Unity is not merely the absence of division; it is a joining together of our lives.
      - Joined together in prayer, worship, studying scripture. (Colossians 3:16)

- Joined together in service with each other and for each other. (Galatians 5:13)
- Joined together in our substance. (2 Cor. 8:14-15)
- Joined as we bear one-another's weaknesses, forbearing and forgiving their offenses. (Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12-15)

- c) We rest because God did not make us to be slaves to work, slaves to greed, slaves to always needing more.
- d) We are a people who no longer live to produce the most we can possibly produce! (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

## II. God's Special Possession (2:9-10)

- A. What does it mean to be a *chosen*, or *elect*, people?
  - i. The same language God used of Israel (Exodus 19:4-6)
  - ii. We too are called to live separated unto God!
    - a) We are not our own. We have been bought.
    - b) A royal priesthood means that we were chosen for the purpose of mediation. For the purpose of standing between God and the world.
  - iii. God calls us out in order to transform us, so that as a transformed people we can mediate His message to the world.
    - a) Genesis 1 & 2: In six days God made the world and on the seventh He rested. He set that day apart.
    - b) God's people acknowledge His creation of the world every week by setting apart of day of rest and refreshing in our worship of God.

- B. NT commands were never intended to be fulfilled apart from community.

William Willimon: *"Do not try to be extraordinarily faithful apart from a community that is extraordinarily forgiving. Violence, servility to the powers, and deceit come quite naturally to us. The lone individual, attempting to stand alone, is no match for the subtle and persistent pressures of the empire [of darkness]. Do not attempt to protect the life of the unborn apart from a community that assumes responsibility for those who are ill equipped to have children in isolation and loneliness. It is the church that makes Christian ethics make sense."*<sup>1</sup>

## III. Foreigners and Exiles

- A. Exiles live longing for their homeland, not for the pleasures of the place where they are.
- B. Our deeds affect each others witness. (1 Peter 2:12)

<sup>1</sup> Willimon, William H.. Calling & Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life (pg. 87). Abingdon Press.